



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

28th February 2021

New Consultant,

RE: CLEAR FACE COVERINGS IN SCHOOLS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the use of face coverings in schools.

As you know, national 'lockdown' came into force on the 5th January 2021. Consistent with the World Health Organisation's advice, schools and colleges should take additional precautionary measures during this period. Government guidance therefore recommends that the use of face coverings in higher education, further education and secondary schools is extended for a limited period to all indoor environments - including classrooms - unless two metre social distancing can be maintained. This is a temporary measure that will last until Easter, at which point it shall be reviewed.

In early years and primary schools where social distancing is not possible in indoor areas outside of classrooms, between members of staff or visitors (for example, in staffrooms), the Government have advised that face coverings should be worn by teachers. Children in primary schools do not need to wear a face covering.

Face coverings should also be worn by pupils in year seven and above when travelling on dedicated school transport to secondary school or college.

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. For example, people who cannot put on, wear, or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability, or if you are speaking to, or providing assistance to, someone who relies on lip reading, clear sound, or facial expression to communicate. The same exemptions will apply in education settings, and I would expect teachers and other staff to be sensitive to those needs.

You specifically make the case for the use of clear face coverings. I know that face coverings can make it more difficult to communicate with children with additional needs who may rely on lip reading or facial expressions for understanding. Along with the Department for Education, I expect school staff to be sensitive to these needs when interacting with, and teaching children. I have, however, relayed your views on this directly to Ministers.

Ahead of stage four of the 'roadmap', the Government will complete a review of social distancing measures and other long-term measures that have been put in place to limit transmission. The results of the review will help inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which rules on 'one metre plus', face masks and other measures may be lifted.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE